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Department of State

(F-15) OUTGOING TELEGRAM
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PREL-45
(Shutte)
31 Aug 85

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DRAFTED BY: NEA PAB: HUAZAT, RUS

APPROVED BY: NEA: RAPECI

HA: TMURPHY (DRAFT)

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 269400

FOR CHARGE

E.O. 12350. DECL. 30 AUG 1990

TAGS: SHUM, PREL, PGOV, PF, US

SUBJECT: (C) BENAZIR BHUTTO DETENTION

REF: STATE 268089 (NOTAL)

1. (C) - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. BY REFTEL, YOU WILL HAVE RECEIVED TEXT OF PRESS GUIDANCE ON HOUSE ARREST OF BENAZIR BHUTTO. NEW YORK TIMES REPORTED DETENTION ON FRONT PAGE 30 AUGUST WITH OUR "DISMAY" WORDED INTO PAGE ONE PART OF STORY AS WELL AS CONTAINED IN INSIDE BOX QUOTING SPOESMAN IN FULL; WASHINGTON POST ALSO CAPSULIZED OUR REACTION, FOCUSING ON "DISMAY," IN PAKISTAN DATELINE STORY RUN ON FRONT PAGE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECTION.

3. WE BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT WE BRING OUR STATEMENT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE GOP AT THE EARLIEST FEASIBLE MOMENT. IN DOING THIS, YOUR AIM SHOULD BE TO USE THE OCCASION TO UNDERSCORE OUR BELIEF THAT THE ACTIONS OF THE MARTIAL LAW REGIME IN THIS INSTANCE -- AND IN APPARENTLY WIDESPREAD MOVES AGAINST OTHER PPP LEADERS IS UNDERCUTTING THE RECENT GAINS MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT IN MOVING TOWARD A RESTORATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT BASED ON REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS. WE APPLAUDED THE FEBRUARY ELECTIONS AND THE RETURN OF PARLIAMENTARY LIFE TO PAKISTAN. WE HAVE WATCHED WITH PRAISE AND APPRECIATION THE STEPS TAKEN BY THE GOP AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO MOVE TOWARD A COMPLETE RELAXATION OF MARTIAL LAW RESTRICTIONS. WE ESPECIALLY COMMEND THE COMMITMENT TO LIFT ALL MARTIAL LAW PROVISIONS BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

4. THE DETENTION OF BENAZIR BHUTTO, AS WE HAVE SAID PUBLICLY, GOES AGAINST THIS TREND. AND WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPACT IT WILL HAVE BOTH ABROAD AND DOMESTICALLY. WE ARE ESPECIALLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBLY ADVERSE EFFECT IT CAN HAVE ON THE CONSENSUS WHICH PRESIDENT ZIA AND PRIME MINISTER JUNEJO HAVE BEEN GRADUALLY EVOLVING AND WHICH IS THE BASIS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF VIABLE AND ENDURING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. ARMACOST

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/COS/AR

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